

CITY OF LONSDALE

SNOW PLOWING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Lonsdale believes that it is in the best interest of the residents for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon on City streets. Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns. The City will use City employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service. This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

The goals of the Public Works Department for snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon control shall be:

- a. Monitor weather and road conditions 24 hours per day.
- b. Maintain all streets in a safe driving condition.
- c. Perform snow removal and ice control in a timely manner.
- d. Perform all maintenance tasks equally and in the best interest of all Lonsdale taxpayers.

2. GUIDELINES FOR SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL

The Public Works Director or his/her designee will determine when a snow emergency is to be declared and when to begin snow and ice control operations. The following are criteria for such a decision:

- a. When snow accumulates on flat areas to a depth of four (4) inches or more;
- b. When drifting snow causes problems for travel;
- c. When icy conditions seriously affect travel;
- d. When snowfall during heavy use of streets makes travel difficult;
- e. When snow or ice conditions during off-peak travel hours would make emergency vehicles travel difficult;

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snow plowing will not generally be conducted for snowfalls of less than one (1) inch.

3. EMERGENCY PARKING REGULATIONS

a. Definitions

For the purpose of this section, the term “Emergency” shall mean any condition upon any public street, including the presence of snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon, which condition creates or is likely to create any hazardous road condition or impedes or is likely to impede the free movement of traffic, when such conditions have been declared by the Public Works Director or his/her designee.

b. Declaration

Upon the existence of an emergency as defined herein, the Public Works Director or his/her designee in the discretion of such person, declares that an emergency exists, whereupon such person shall notify the radio stations KCHK 95.5 FM / 1350 AM and KDHL 920 AM, television stations: WCCO channel 4, KSTP channel 5, KMSP channel 9 and KARE channel 11 and request that such media cooperate with the City in giving notice of such emergency to the community. The emergency regulations set forth below shall become effective two hours after such notice has been given by the City to such news media. If an emergency is declared the day before for a set time the next day, the emergency will become effective as stated in the notification.

In addition to notifying the aforementioned radio stations, the City will make this policy available to residents on the City’s website.

c. Unlawful Acts

During an emergency, it is unlawful for any person, as a driver or operator of a vehicle, or as the registered owner of such vehicle, to park, stop or leave standing, or cause, allow or permit to be parked, stopped or left standing, whether knowingly or unknowingly, any such vehicle upon any City street until the street is plowed curb to curb.

In order to accommodate residents that may not have sufficient on-site parking, the City will plow a designated City Park parking lot so it will be available during snow emergencies.

d. Ticket

Upon the existence of an emergency as defined in Section 3, Subdivision A, the City may ticket vehicles in violation of this policy as authorized by the City Code .

e. Towing

Upon the existence of an emergency as defined in Section 3, Subdivision A, the City may tow vehicles in violation of this policy as authorized by City Code Chapter 71: Parking Regulations and also Minnesota State Statute 168B.035.

4. **MANNER OF SNOW PLOWING**

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize any traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow will then be pushed from left to right but in certain situations from right to left. The discharge will go onto the boulevard area of the street. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always be immediately or completely cleared of snow. The City does not assure a completely bare roadway. Users of City roadways are reminded to exercise caution and to drive with care.

5. **TRAFFIC REGULATIONS**

The City recognizes that snowplow operators are exempt from traffic regulations set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169 while actually engaged in work on streets, except for regulations related to driving while impaired and the safety of school children. Pursuant to this authority, snowplow operators engaged in snow removal or ice control on city streets have discretion to disregard traffic laws set forth in Chapter 169, except for laws relating to impaired driving and school children safety, when in their judgment, it is safe to disregard such laws. The privilege granted herein to operators of snow removal and ice control vehicles shall apply only if the vehicle is equipped with one lighted light displaying a flashing, oscillating or rotating amber light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

6. **RIGHT-OF-WAY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Damage to a mailbox is a risk that snowplow operators face while performing winter plowing requirements. Mailboxes, lights, etc. should be constructed sturdy enough to withstand snow rolling off the plow or wing. Therefore, damage resulting from snow is the responsibility of the resident. The City may accept responsibility for damage if a mailbox is physically struck by a plow and if the mailbox post is considered to be of proper construction, regulation height, proper distance from the curb line and in good repair. The City will conduct a review of each mailbox damage claim and in its discretion, will determine whether the City has any legal responsibility for the damage and if so, will replace or provide reimbursement for the mail box as follows:

- a. At the mailbox owner's request, replace the mailbox with a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox and replace the support post(s) as necessary with a 4" x 4", decay resistant wood support post, both which will be installed by the City;
- b. Provide reimbursement in a reasonable amount for the mailbox and support post(s) as necessary that meet the City's requirements as well as state and federal requirements for size, support and placement.

Improvements in the right-of-way (boulevards) including, but not limited to fences, mailboxes, planter boxes, light fixtures, decorative landscaping and irrigation systems have been placed on the City's property in most instances without notification or permission from the City. Mailboxes and similar objects are quite often obvious and easy to avoid. Low structures, decorative landscaping and irrigation systems are impossible to be aware of after a storm. Therefore, the City cannot accept responsibility for the damage.

7. SNOW REMOVAL

The Public Works Director or his/her designee will determine if and when snow will be removed by truck from an area. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is not room on the boulevard for snow storage, cul-de-sacs, and in areas where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition. Streets that will have snow removal on a regular basis shall include:

- Main Street:
 - Between Railway St. NW and Florida St. SE/SW
- Railway St. NW:
 - Between Main St. N. and 2nd Ave NW
- Alabama St. SE:
 - Between Main St. S. and 2nd Ave SE
- 2nd Ave SE:
 - Between Highway 19 and Arizona St. SE
- 1st Ave SE:
 - Between Highway 19 and Alabama St. SE
- Birch St. NW:
 - Between Main St. N. and 2nd Ave NW
- 2nd Ave NW:
 - Between Birch St. NW and approximately 200 feet to the south

Snow removal from cul-de-sacs will not occur for snowfalls of less than four (4) inches unless there is not room on the boulevard for storage or where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition. When snowfalls of more than four (4) inches are experienced, snow may be piled in the center of the cul-de-sac and removed.. Snow removal operations will not commence until other snow plowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability. The snow will be hauled to a snow storage area. The snow area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems.

8. PRIORITIES AND SCHEDULE IN WHICH STREETS WILL BE PLOWED

The City has classified City streets based on the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the City. The streets classified as 1st Priority are high volume streets, which connect major sections of the City and provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services. The 2nd Priority streets are low volume residential streets. The 3rd Priority streets are alleys and city related areas.

1st Priority

(See attached map)
Main Street N. & S.
Trcka Park Ice Rink
Fire Station/City Hall
Police Station

2nd Priority

All other streets

3rd Priority

Alleys
WWTP
WTP
City Maint. Building
Lift Stations
Well Houses
Hockey Rink
Sidewalks/trails

During significant and severe storms, the City must be prepared to move personnel and equipment to maintain priority streets first. In fulfilling the need to have all priority streets safe and passable, when resources are limited, plowing of all other priorities may be stopped at any time so resources can be shifted to higher priorities.

Unforeseen circumstances may cause delays in completing assigned plow routes. Such circumstances may include weather conditions that endanger the safety of snowplow operators and/or safe and effective operation of equipment, commuter traffic, disabled vehicles, poor visibility conditions, parked cars along streets, assistance to emergency response vehicles, equipment breakdown and personnel shortages.

9. WEATHER CONDITIONS

Snow, ice and other phenomenon control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of City employees and equipment. Factors that may delay snow, ice and other phenomenon control operations include severe cold, significant winds and limited visibility.

10. USE OF SAND AND SALT

The City will use sand, salt and other chemicals when there is hazardous ice or slippery conditions on streets only. The Public Works Director or his/her designee will determine if sand/salt or other chemicals will be used on trails in cases of emergencies and/or ice control because the City is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for that reason.

11. SIDEWALKS

The City will maintain some of the sidewalks/ trails in the City. The list of these sidewalks/trails is below. Since there are a limited number of personnel available, the City may maintain these sidewalks/trails after the streets and parking lots have been plowed.

- a. Railway Street SW – north side between 3rd Ave SW and Arizona St. NW
- b. Railway Street NW – south side between 2nd Ave NW and Main St. N.
- c. Highway 19 – south side between 3rd Ave SE and 3rd Ave SW
- d. Main St. S. west side between Alabama St. SW and Idaho St. S.
- e. All walking paths / trails

It is the responsibility of the residents and/or property owner to remove all accumulated snow from all other sidewalks along public streets adjoining their property. This includes any snow plowed from the public street onto the sidewalk.

12. PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT

The City of Lonsdale maintains approximately 35 miles of streets and 1 mile of alleys.

Personnel: Snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon removal operations involves the use of the Public Works Department.

Equipment: Snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon equipment owned by the City includes:
3 – Dump trucks with plows and sanders
1 – Front end Loader
1 – Skid Loader
1 – Tractor and Blower
1 – Lawnmower and Blower, Blade and Broom
1 – UTV with V-plow and spreader

Plow trucks will normally plow at speeds of up to 25 miles per hour.

13. PRIVATE PROPERTY SNOW REMOVAL AND ICE CONTROL

- a. Minnesota State Statute 160.2715 states that it is unlawful to deposit snow and ice onto public right-of-ways. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Piles of snow also increase chances of drifting snow onto the roadway.
- b. City equipment will not be used to remove stuck vehicles from ditches, snow banks or any other impediment.

15. CITY COUNCIL RIGHT TO DEVIATE FROM POLICY

While this Snow Plowing Policy is intended to address many of the issues involving snow removal, the City Council reserves the right to modify and or delete responsibilities or modify order of priorities as it may deem necessary for the sake of public health, safety and welfare.

16. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Complaints will be provided to the Public Works Director for review and response. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available.

17. ADOPTION / REVISIONS

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Lonsdale, Minnesota this 24th day of October, 2022.

Revised: October 28, 2010
December 12, 2013
October 25, 2018
November 30, 2020
October 24, 2022